

Dear Members of the Human Services Committee of Connecticut General Assembly:

My name is Sarah Tracy-Wanck, and I am from New Haven.. I am also part of Integrated Refugee and Immigrant Services based out of New Haven, CT.

I stand in support of SB284: AN ACT INCREASING THE AGE FROM EIGHT TO EIGHTEEN YEARS FOR AN INCOME-ELIGIBLE PERSON TO OBTAIN MEDICAL ASSISTANCE REGARDLESS OF IMMIGRATION STATUS. Expanding access to HUSKY up to age 18 regardless of immigration status is an important step in making sure our immigrant community has access to the healthcare we all need and deserve. But our work doesn't end with expanding access up to age 18; we need to open access to HUSKY and healthcare to all immigrants of any age, including parents and adults.

I have relied on health insurance all my life. I also have benefited from HUSKY when I did not have sufficient income for health insurance. When my partner could not afford health insurance, had not gotten HUSKY yet, and had to get an emergency appendectomy, we relied on a relief grant from the state to pay for the \$40,000 worth of medical bills that an uninsured person is hit with when having this routine emergency procedure and one night hospital stay. That night, on the way to Middlesex Hospital, we considered driving to Canada and heading to the closest ER because we knew that this emergency procedure could potentially put us in incalculable debt. Would we have made it? Is risking one's life worth it to try to avoid the significant medical debt that can also debilitate one's life? Immigrants have to make this type of calculation everyday. People who get no help from the state, who pay taxes, who pay rent, have no access to this basic human right. This needs to change.

You need to pass this legislation and protect the health of all children. We need to expand HUSKY so that all residents of CT can be eligible for health insurance.

I support S.B. 284 and I ask the committee to support and pass this legislation. Looking forward, I ask the committee to work towards opening access to all immigrants regardless of age.

Thank you for your time,
Sarah Tracy-Wanck

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